Supporting Travel Options

How the City encourages alternatives to driving alone.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the City can support alternatives to driving alone through information, incentives, partnerships, and policies to reduce congestion on our streets and make our transportation system more sustainable. These practices—often called Transportation Demand Management (TDM)—are not about forcing people out of their cars, but rather making a variety of transportation options (i.e. transit, carpool, telework, cycling, and walking) easy, accessible, and convenient to give more travel choices to more people.

The development of this chapter was called for in the *Environmental Action Plan (EAP) 2040* to improve the City's existing programs that support travel and mobility options to help achieve EAP and *City Strategic Plan* goals for reducing vehicle miles traveled in the city and increasing the share of biking, walking, and transit trips.

> " By FY2023, develop a stand-alone Transportation Demand Management Chapter in the Alexandria Mobility Plan (formerly the Transportation Master Plan) to promote low-carbon modes of transportation.
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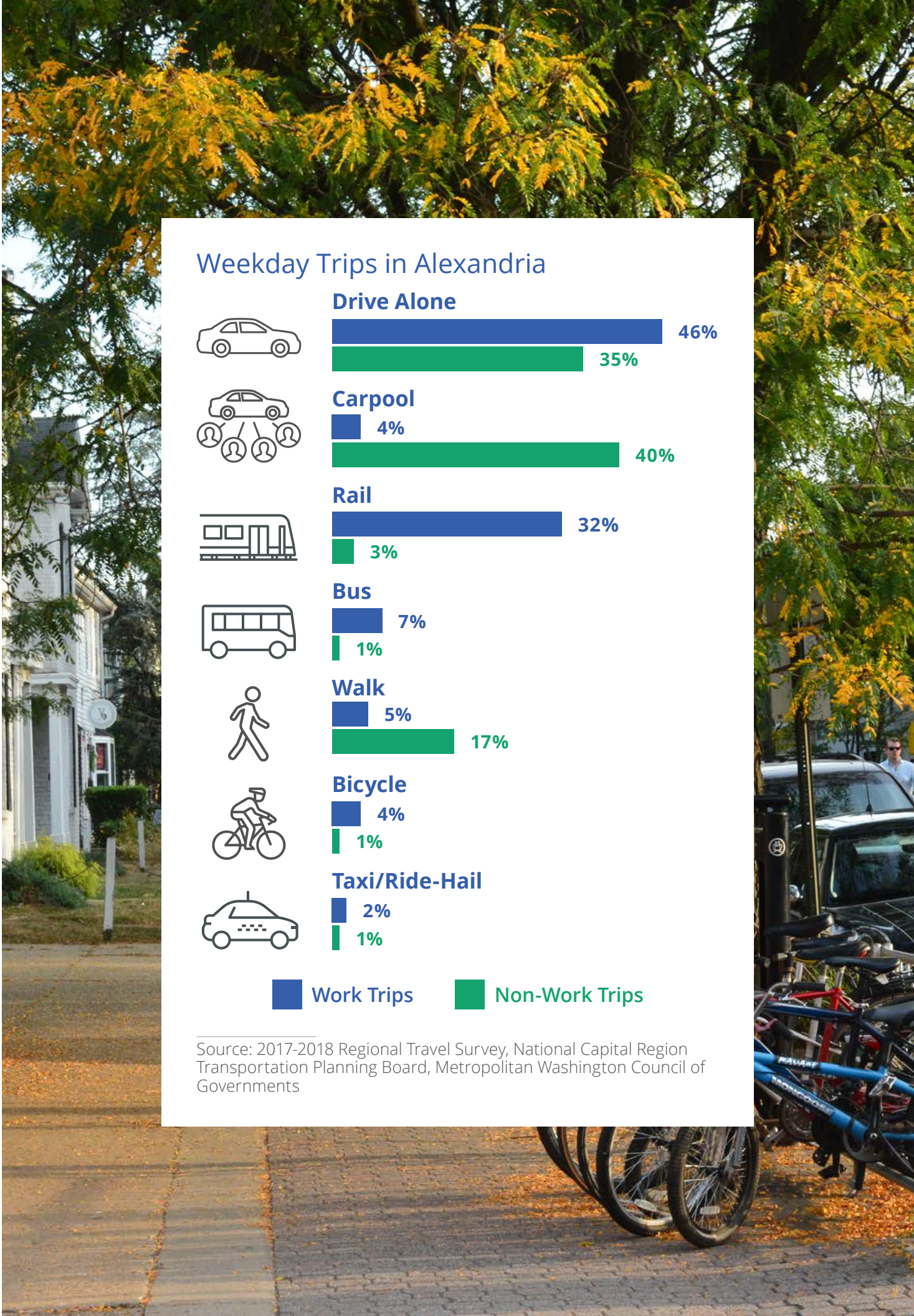> – Short-Term Action 7.2.1, *Environmental Action Plan 2040* "

Key Context

74%
of trips in Alexandria are non-work trips[1]

59%
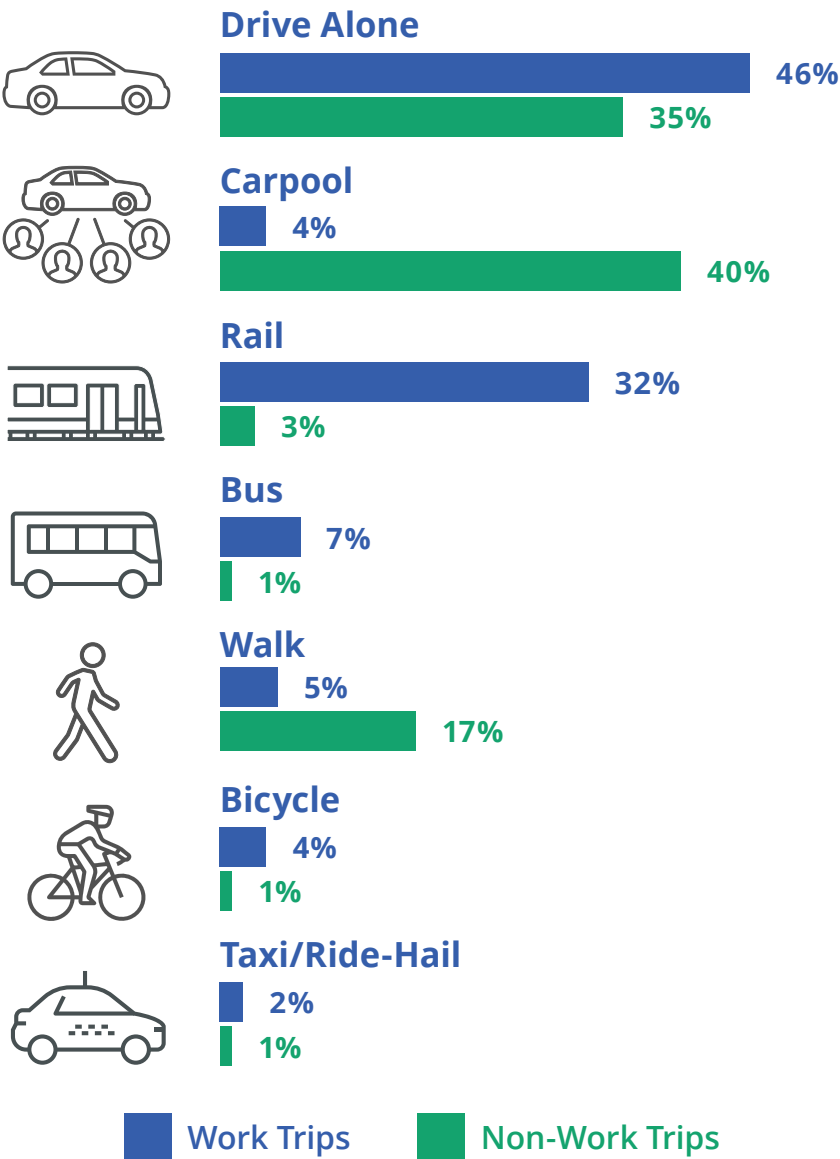of trips in Alexandria are less than 3 miles[1]

46%
of commute trips in Alexandria are single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips[1]

36%
of carbon emissions in Alexandria are produced by transportation, making transportation the second-largest emissions-producing sector[2]

1. 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.
2. City of Alexandria Environmental Action Plan 2040.

Weekday Trips in Alexandria

Drive Alone
46% (Work)
35% (Non-Work)

Carpool
4% (Work)
40% (Non-Work)

Rail
32% (Work)
3% (Non-Work)

Bus
7% (Work)
1% (Non-Work)

Walk
5% (Work)
17% (Non-Work)

Bicycle
4% (Work)
1% (Non-Work)

Taxi/Ride-Hail
2% (Work)
1% (Non-Work)

■ Work Trips   ■ Non-Work Trips

Source: 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Existing Programs, Policies, and Initiatives

GO Alex

The City's GO Alex program provides residents, commuters, and employers with resources to help promote mobility options through:

- Developing employer-specific plans and resources
- Assisting in rideshare matching
- Promoting regional incentives to try different transportation options
- Providing travel tools and information across Alexandria

The policies and strategies in this chapter aim to support GO Alex by improving and expanding the reach of its programming to make more people more aware of Alexandria's wide range of travel choices it offers such as bus service, commuter and intercity rail, bikeshare, micromobility, paratransit, and more.

Transportation Management Plans

A transportation management plan (TMP) is a site-specific plan to encourage residents and employees to take public transportation, walk, bike, or share a ride as opposed to driving alone to reduce rush hour congestion. Developers of new buildings are required to submit a TMP that outlines how they will reduce drive-alone trips and report back to the City.

In 2021, there are approximately 65 active TMPs in the city. TMPs help achieve efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities by providing bikeshare memberships, transit passes, and information to residents and workers.

Policies

The Supporting Travel Options chapter policies will guide the City's decision-making around increasing availability and encouraging use of flexible and sustainable travel options for all types of trips.

Policy A: Enhance choice

Make it easier for more people to choose an alternative to driving alone.

The City of Alexandria will apply evidenced-based practices that have been demonstrated to be the most effective at reducing drive-alone travel to reduce congestion, improve public health, and make the city more sustainable.

Policy B: Promote work flexibility

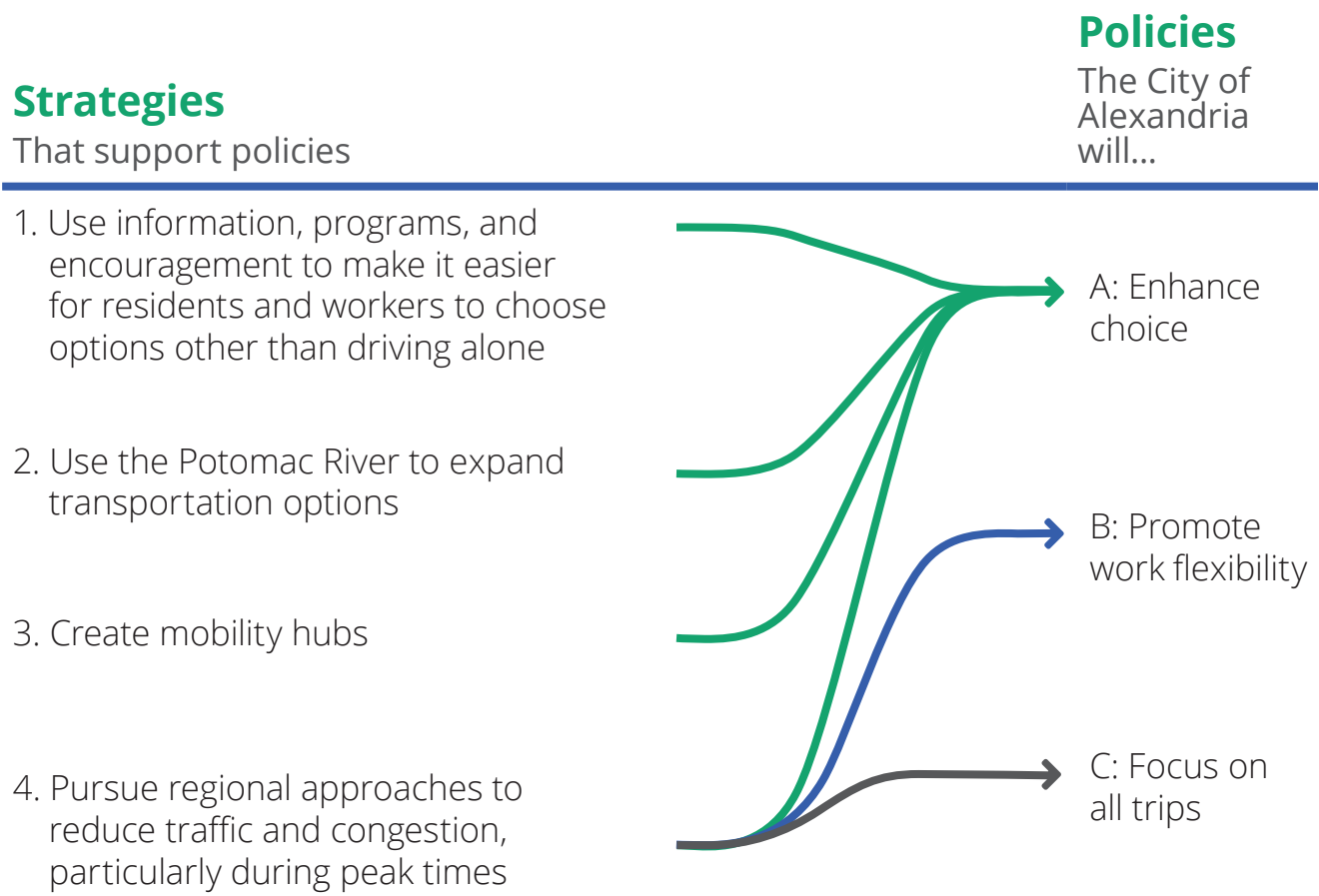Encourage continued telework and flexible schedules to reduce congestion and emissions.

Teleworking and modified work schedules can help shift travel times and alleviate traffic congestion during peak periods. The City of Alexandria will work to encourage broader telework and flexible schedule practices among employers to reduce demand on the transportation network during peak periods.

Policy C: Focus on all trips

Shift non-commute trips away from driving alone.

Outreach and education regarding travel options is traditionally focused on commute-to-work trips, despite that fact that non-commute trips make up three quarters of all trips in Alexandria. The City of Alexandria will work to better understand how to expand mobility options for all travelers, whether they are traveling for school, errands, shopping, recreation, tourism, or other resons. Reducing dependence on driving not only helps manage congestion, but also promotes a healthier and safer Alexandria. With the potential for long-term shifts in travel and commuting patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, considering all types of trips is important.

Strategies
That support policies

Policies
The City of Alexandria will…

1. Use information, programs, and encouragement to make it easier for residents and workers to choose options other than driving alone

2. Use the Potomac River to expand transportation options

3. Create mobility hubs

4. Pursue regional approaches to reduce traffic and congestion, particularly during peak times

A: Enhance choice

B: Promote work flexibility

C: Focus on all trips

Strategies

Strategy 1. Use information, programs, and encouragement to make it easier for residents and workers to choose options other than driving alone

Actions

- Identify an expanded set of community influencers (such as religious leaders, school principals, and athletic organizations), in addition to employers and residential property managers, to help encourage alternatives to driving alone
- Update the Transportation Management Plan program so new developments can better reduce and track congestion
- Develop a travel training and commuter assistance program to provide hands-on experience on taking a new (to you) way of traveling
- Expand use of real-time information to promote travel choices

Addressing the Need

Only 20 percent of Alexandrians are aware of GO Alex, the City's program that works to encourage the use of public transit, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking as money- and time-saving alternatives that also are more environmentally-friendly.[3] To increase the use of the variety of travel options available in Alexandria, it is important that people know about the program.

It is important that information on travel options—such as transit, bikeshare, car share, and rideshare—is available in one place so travelers can make informed decisions about which they choose.

Improved guidelines for developers can produce more and better-quality data on how new developments are impacting travel patterns and promoting multimodal options.

Advancing City Plans and Goals

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Reduce Automobile Dependency and Educate Individuals and Employers on Mobility Options Other Than Single-Occupancy Driving
- Increase the Share of All Trips Taken by Public Transit, Walking, and Biking by at Least 15 Percent by 2023

City Strategic Plan

- Increase the Percentage of Commuters Using Alternative Transportation Options

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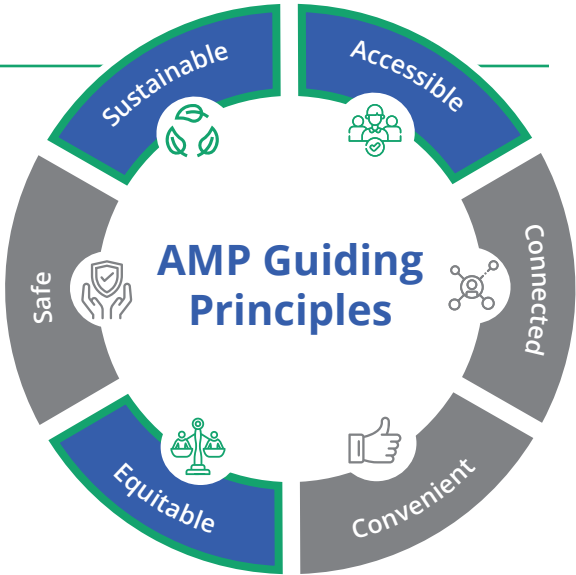
> **Travel training refers to the practice of teaching people to travel independently on different modes of transportation,** such as public transit. Travel training programs are intended to encourage behavior changes by giving people a level of comfort with and understanding of travel options that are new to them. These programs can be offered in a group setting or one-on-one and also can be specialized for seniors or people who have cognitive or physical mobility challenges.

3. AlexMoves – City of Alexandria Mobility Survey, 2019.

Strategy 2. Use the Potomac River to expand transportation options

Actions

- Partner with other jurisdictions, agencies, and private partners to determine the best ways to utilize the Potomac River as a transportation option

- Explore and evaluate new water transportation routes and services for commute and trips, errands, or entertainment

- Identify opportunities to integrate with other modes of transportation

Credit: Potomac Riverboat Company

Addressing the Need

There is a need to provide enhanced transportation options and transit connections, especially those that do not impact the city's constrained street network, to make progress toward key environmental priorities such as reducing vehicle miles traveled.

As noted during Alexandria Mobility Plan focus group meetings, the **Potomac River is an underutilized transportation resource** in the region and using it for new travel options could be an effective means of providing alternatives to driving and alleviating congestion.

During the WMATA Platform Improvement Project in the summer of 2019 that shut down Metrorail service in Alexandria, the Potomac Riverboat Company began offering new morning commuter service from Old Town Alexandria to The Wharf in Washington, DC. **This new ferry travel option was well received** among those who opted for it and **did not cause increased traffic or parking challenges at the waterfront**. This strategy will explore ways to build upon the success of that experiment.

Advancing City Plans and Goals

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

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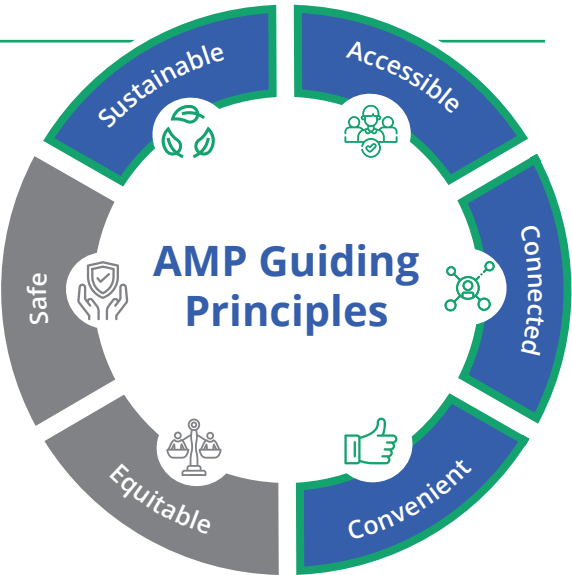
Strategy 3. Create mobility hubs

Actions

- Identify optimal locations for mobility hubs in strategic locations around the city. These mobility hubs will differ in size and scope based on location type and may incorporate elements to improve navigation for all users of the site through wayfinding and other features

- Incorporate charging infrastructure for carshare vehicles, personal vehicles, and micromobility devices (electric bikes, scooters, etc.)

- Focus on traditionally underserved communities and strategic locations to address first- and last-mile travel needs citywide

Addressing the Need

There is a need to better serve the city—especially areas with more limited transit service—with smaller-scale and more cost-effective travel options that offer alternatives to driving for getting to transit hubs or other short trips. Mobility hubs also provide convenient choices for which modes to use depending on the length and purpose of your trips

A **mobility hub** is a location that brings multiple modes of transportation together in one physical location and are often clustered near high-frequency transit stations such as a Metrorail station. Typical mobility hub components can support short trips and/or first- and last-mile journeys and include bicycle and scooter parking, electric vehicle chargers, carshare vehicles, and pedestrian wayfinding signage.

Your Trip

First Mile   Last Mile
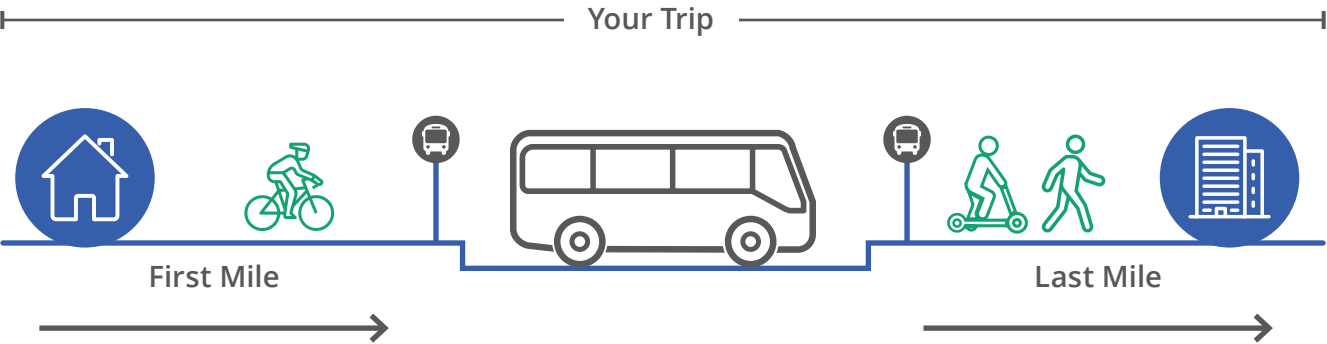
Advancing City Plans and Goals

Smart Mobility Framework Plan

- Improve and Expand Mobility on Demand as a Means to Improve Accessibility

- Plan for Emerging and Future Transportation Technologies

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Adopt Permanent Regulations for Shared Mobility Devices such as Dockless Bikes, Electric Scooters, and Other Personal Mobility Devices by Fiscal Year 2023

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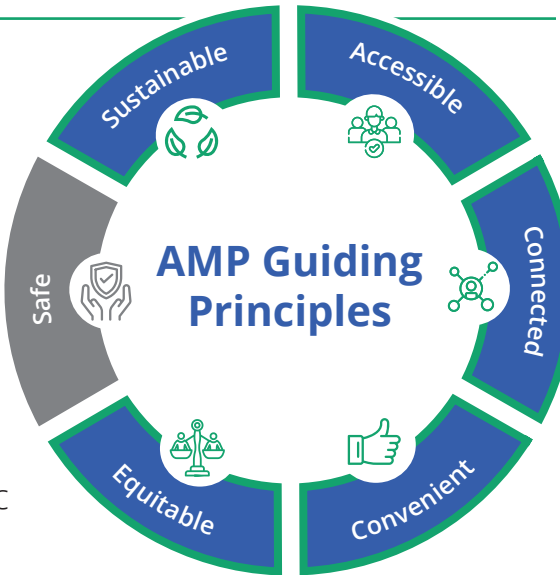
Strategy 4. Pursue regional approaches to reduce traffic and congestion, particularly during peak times

Actions

- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and regional entities to explore unifying local TDM programs into a more comprehensive regional effort

- Advocate for policies that will help manage congestion, such as telework incentives or a regional congestion pricing program

- Continue to support regional transportation initiatives, including Commuter Connections, and targeted TDM initiatives of a regional scale, such as the Northern Virginia Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (R3MP)

Addressing the Need

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT)—a measure of how much people are driving—in Alexandria was reduced by 12 percent between 2010 and 2018[4] mostly due to travel on local streets. However, regional travel has not changed significantly and represents an equal proportion of VMT on City streets. With Alexandria generally bordered on two sides by I-395 and I-495, City streets can be used as cut-through or alternative routes, especially during congested periods. It is important that Alexandria continues to coordinate with regional partners to pursue efforts that will manage transportation demand to further decrease VMT and, thereby, reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

The Northern Virginia **Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P)** leverages "the collaborative use of real-time data by Virginia's public and private sectors to improve travel safety, reliability, and mobility and to give the public the tools to make more informed travel choices." The program includes elements such as data-exchange programs, commuter parking information systems, dynamic incentivization, artificial intelligence-based decision support system, and a multi-modal analytical planner. The program advances the use of technology to support jurisdictions and cities to achieve their goals of increasing modal splits and a more dynamic, safe, and efficient transportation system.

Advancing City Plans and Goals

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Reduce Automobile Dependency and Educate Individuals and Employers on Mobility Options Other Than Single-Occupancy Driving

City Strategic Plan

- Increase the Percentage of Commuters Using Alternative Transportation Options

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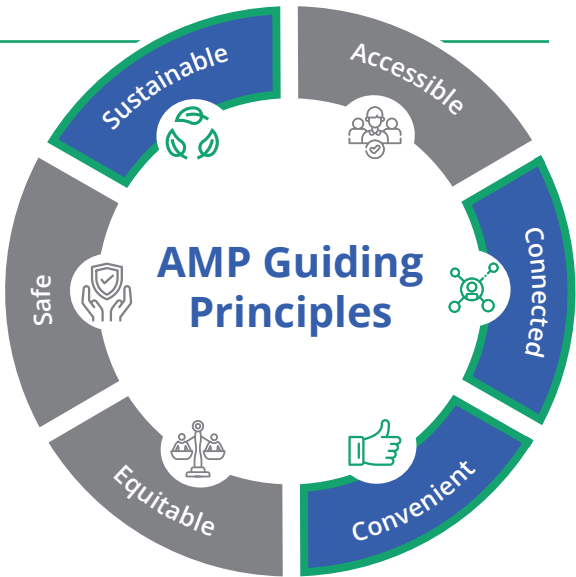
4. Vehicle Miles Travelled - Weekday Trends Modeled Region 2005 to 2018, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Metrics

The strategies and policies in this chapter are intended to move the needle on the following measurable metrics. Additional details on metrics, including applicable targets for future years, can be found in **Appendix II - Monitoring, Reporting, and Key Performance Indicators**.

Metric

Number of community influencers involved with GO Alex

Percent of people taking non-single occupancy vehicles to work (mode share)

Weekday person hours of delay

Credit: Hover Solutions for Visit Alexandria